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IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 2, line 31 (and continuing through page 3, line 10) with the following amended paragraph.

The invention relates generally to providing Internet access services via a LAN. More particularly, a method and associated apparatus is described for providing paid access to a computer network, such as the Internet, comprising accessing, via a local area network (LAN), a micro-service provider (μ SP). The μ SP establishes a secure tunnel with each client, preventing unauthorized or nonpaying users from gaining service. Clients negotiate a contract for network usage with saidthe μ SP. Contracts may have a term as short as desired. Clients may pay for service at the point of service, and no relationship between client and μ SP is necessary before or after the contract. Clients access saidthe computer network via said μ SP according to saidthe contract.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 17 (and continuing through page 4, line 22) with the following amended paragraph.

The μ SP architecture 200 comprises one or more client computers 202a to 202d, a μ SP LAN 222, a μ SP router and server 220, and an access link 206 to a conventional SP POP 106. The POP 106 may include an access router 108, one or more servers 110, a backbone router 112, and a link 114 to the Internet 444115, as also shown in FIG. 1.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 23, line 9 (and continuing through page 23, line 24) with the following amended paragraph.

The μ SP router/server 220 does not provide to client computers 202a to 202d local content and email or Web page hosting services. However, such lack of email or Web page hosting is not a disadvantage because owners of client computers 202a to 202d can easily find on-the-Web portals or servers that provide such services for free (e.g., www.yahoo.com, www.hotmail.com, and www.geocities.com) among others. Web-based services have the advantage of being accessible wherever the client may

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be. The μSP architecture uses the services of conventional SPs. The μSP architecture may be able to substantially reduce the cost of such services by implementing Network Address Translation (NAT) in the router between the μSP LAN and the shared access link. When NAT is used, all μSP client computers 202a to 202d use the same global IP address and appear to the conventional SP as a single host.

Please replace the Abstract with the following amended Abstract:

A method and associated apparatus for providing access to the Internet or other network is described, where clients may connect their own computers to a LAN supplied by the access provider, who may charge for such access and may use security protocols for denying access to unauthorized or nonpaying users, and where the contract between client and access provider may be established at the point of access, independently of a previous relationship between both parties, and may have term as short as the client desires. ~~in~~ In one aspect, the access provider may use the access services of another access provider and may use Network Address Translation (NAT) to reduce access costs. The client may select the desired level of security, usage metrics, usage limits, and payment options, and may monitor and control his or her usage. In one aspect, the client does not need to reveal his or her identity to the access provider. In one aspect, the access provider may present to the client a certificate signed by a Certification Authority that ensures that the access provider is bona fide and secure. In one aspect, the access provider gives the client a receipt that the client may use to recover from client or access provider failures.

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